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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADANA 000187

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PINS PGOV PHUM TU

SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR AUGUST 20, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for August 20, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET: An explosion took place in a natural gas transportation line of BOTAS (between Iran and Turkey) in Agri's Taslicay Township on Saturday (08/19) at 9.15 p.m. Governor's Office of Agri announced that the explosion took place as a result of PKK's terrorist attack. The fire that resulted from the explosion threatened the villages in the environs.

Firefighters and ambulances were sent to the area. The fire stopped when the gas was cut off from the line.

CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Fire broke out in Petroleum Production Fields of TPAO (Turkish Petroleum Corporation) in Mardin's Nusaybin district the previous night at 1 a.m. The fire spread via the wind to a 10-kilometer area where mines were located. Firefighters took the fire under control after 6 hours of hard work. Three mines reportedly went off during the fire. No casualties were reported.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The number of soldiers dispatched to Hakkari from other cities reportedly reached 250,000. Checkpoints were increased from 2 to 7 in the city, and people are not able to go out of their homes after certain times at night. People are not allowed to go to the highlands and breed their animals there. War planes flying low, intermittent cannon fire, and increased military activity are reportedly adversely affecting the psychology of the people.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Police in Silopi caught 24 Iraqi Kurds who entered the country illegally in Sirnak's Silopi district. The refugees were sent to the Habur Border Gate to be deported after their medical examinations were completed.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Flooding occurred in a village of Van because of the heavy rains. Fifty houses were damaged and 150 sheep and goats were killed.

OZGUR GUNDEM: The mayor of Van's Kurtalan district (from DTP) had an accident with his official car as he was traveling to Ankara. The mayor was seriously wounded and is now under intensive care. Diyarbakir Mayor Osman Baydemir, and DTP Co-Chairpersons Ahmet Turk and Aysel Tugluk went to the hospital upon hearing the news.

OZGUR GUNDEM: DTP's Adana branch has been successful in resolving the hostilities between two families that erupted one month ago in Adana's Sakirpasa quarter.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Senior officials of Mazlum-Der (Association for Solidarity with Oppressed People) and Human Rights Association (HRA) will go to Iraq to get more information about Mustafa Egili, Ozgur-Der (Free Thought and Educational Rights Association) national chairperson, who was detained in the Federal Kurdistan Region on June 1 with another Ozgur-Der official from Diyarbakir.

OZGUR GUNDEM: It is claimed that Iran's security officials surrendered 3 PJAK (Party of Free Life of Kurdistan) members to Turkey. Those PJAK members were then reportedly brought to Yuksekova District Security Directorate. A second military operation in the last week came in the Kato Mountain of Sirnak's Beytussebap district. Village guards and jandarma commandos are reportedly extending suport to the operation.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM / BOLGE: A 50-person group, which was comprised of members of HRA, KESK (Confederation of Public Employees' Unions), ESP (Socialist Party of Oppressed People), EMEP (Party of Labor), DTP (Democratic Society Party), SDP (Socialist Democracy Party), held a press announcement in front of Incirlik Airbase against shipment of military materiel from the base to the NATO port in Mersin and against recent discussions on sending Turkish troops to Lebanon.

ZAMAN / CUMHURIYET / OZGUR GUNDEM: Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, a U.S. terrorism expert, wrote an article on HYPERLINK "<http://www.counterterrorismblog.org>" www.counterterrorismblog.org and said that the U.S. and Turkey developed a joint strategy to counter PKK. The strategy was reportedly developed in order to prevent Turkey from undertaking

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a unilateral incursion into Iraq, which would have risked accidental Turkish engagement with non-PKK Kurdish forces or even U.S. forces.

ZAMAN / OZGUR GUNDEM: The European Court, which accepted the file submitted about the dam project which envisages submerging ancient Hasankeyf district under dam waters, requested that Turkey provide urgent information on the measures taken to preserve the district's historical richness.

ZAMAN: Restoration works on the 10th century Armenian Church on an island on Lake Van will be completed soon, and PM Erdogan will hold the opening ceremony on October 15. The Armenian Minister of Culture will also be invited to Turkey for the opening ceremony.

ZAMAN: PM Erdogan reportedly called last week the father of a soldier, who died because of a remote controlled PKK mine in a village of Bitlis in July. Erdogan reportedly tried to raise the family's morale and gave information to the father on measures taken to combat PKK terrorism.

ZAMAN: A group of environmentalists in Adana, who complained about the pollution levels in the Seyhan River, collected 12 sacks of garbage on the riverside in one hour. The general secretary of Adana Municipality said that although it was DSI (State Water Works Authority), not the Adana Municipality, whose responsibilities covered cleaning of the bank of the Seyhan River, the municipality still embarked upon efforts to clean the riverbank.

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